

NJ Department of Environmental Protection

Division of Fish and Wildlife

Canada Goose Control Information

Background

New Jersey contains several populations of Canada geese including resident geese, which occur year round, and migrant populations, which are present from October through March. Although Canada geese are a valuable wildlife resource, they can cause significant damage and human conflicts in overabundance situations.

Successful abatement of Canada goose damage requires an integrated damage management program which utilizes nonlethal and sometimes lethal approaches. A publication available at <http://www.berrymaninstitute.org/pdf/urbangeese.pdf> provides a good overview for implementing an integrated damage management program.

Where reasonable and safe, hunting plays an important role in Canada goose damage management. Hunting removes birds from the population and enhances the utility of hazing techniques. Season dates and hunting regulations for Canada geese can be found at: www.njfishandwildlife.com/waterfowl_info.htm.

Primary management authority for all migratory birds, including Canada geese, lies with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) with secondary involvement by the states. Many states, including New Jersey, have implemented several federal depredation orders allowed under Service regulations, to allow citizens increased flexibility to deal with Resident Population Canada goose damage.

Outlined below are the various Canada goose damage abatement strategies and depredation orders, as well as registration and permit requirements, that can be employed by different landowners and property managers in New Jersey. There are sections for the following categories of landowners:

- Homeowners and Property Managers
- Farmers
- Lake Communities/Recreational Areas
- Airports

Homeowners and Property Managers

Nest and egg treatment: Internet registration; March 1 - June 30

If you are a homeowner or property manager experiencing problems with Canada geese, you can obtain a free permit to destroy nests and/or treat eggs on your property. Simply register on-line with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at <https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/geSI.aspx>. You must register prior to destroying nests or eggs. Considerable flexibility is allowed regarding who can do the nest and egg work on which types of properties; check the “Frequently Asked Questions” tab on this web site for further information. You can obtain detailed information on how to destroy nests and/or treat eggs on this web site by clicking on the “Management of Canada goose nesting” tab. In addition, a USDA Wildlife Services video on egg oiling of Canada goose nests is available at <http://www.youtube.com/usdaaphis#p/a/u/0/2CLIL-381Lw>. Nests and eggs may only be taken between March 1 and June 30. You must return to the web site by October 31, to report the number of nests and eggs destroyed, even if none were destroyed that year.

Property Damage: Year-round

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) allows the use of federal depredation permits when Canada geese are causing damage. Depredation permits allow for more aggressive control (i.e., capture/removal, shooting) of geese in damage situations. In addition, depredation permits allow for the management of Canada geese during seasons of the year when other populations (i.e., migrants) of Canada geese are present. However, before a depredation permit is issued, the applicant must demonstrate that nonlethal methods were previously attempted and will continue to be used along with the requested lethal methods. A permit application can be obtained from the Service at <http://www.fws.gov/forms/3-200-13>. The US Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services, is also available for assistance with the permitting process by calling 908-735-5654.

Farmers

Farmers and their employees, who are actively farming may control geese by destroying nests and/or eggs and through other nonlethal wildlife damage management strategies. Permits are also available to farmers for lethal control of geese when they are causing damage to agricultural crops.

Nest and egg treatment: Internet registration; March 1 - June 30

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Agricultural Depredation Order: State Permit; May 1 - August 31

The state Division of Fish and Wildlife may issue a free permit to farmers for the lethal control of geese between May 1 and August 31 when geese are causing damage to agricultural crops, and to prevent damage to agricultural crops. The permit must be obtained prior to implementing any control program. Contact Anthony McBride at 908-735-8793 or anthonymcbride@earthlink.net for more information.

Property Damage: Year-round

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Lake Communities/Recreational Areas

Public Health Depredation Order: State Permit; April 1 – August 31

Municipalities, lake associations and county parks may apply to the Division of Fish and Wildlife for a permit to control Canada goose when the geese are causing a direct threat to human health in lakes or ponds that are used for swimming. The permit applicant must submit a letter from the state, county or local health department stating that Canada geese are causing the health threat by creating conditions conducive to the transmission of pathogens. The permit applicant must describe the control method to be used, the agent carrying out the control method, agent qualifications and method of disposal or donation of geese. Control techniques may be employed April 1 – August 31. Culled geese may be by donated to museums or public institutions for scientific or educational purposes, processed for human consumption and subsequent distribution free of charge to charitable organizations, or buried or incinerated. Euthanasia must be by means approved by the American Veterinary Medical Association Guidelines on Euthanasia. For more information on obtaining a permit to control geese to protect human health, contact Susan Predl with the Division of Fish and Wildlife at 908-735-7040 or susan.predl@dep.state.nj.us.

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Airports

In order to resolve or prevent hazards caused by Canada geese, airports may employ the following control methods: nest and egg destruction, gosling and adult trapping and culling programs, and other lethal or non-lethal control strategies.

Nest and egg treatment: Internet registration; March 1 - June 30

Nests and eggs may be destroyed March 1 –June 30 by registering at <https://epermits.fws.gov/eRCGR/geSI.aspx>.

Airport Depredation Order: State Permit; April 1 – September 15.

Permits may be issued by the Division of Fish and Wildlife for lethal control employed between April 1 and September 15. Only shotguns with nontoxic shot may be used. Contact Susan Predl at 908-735-7040 or susan.predl@dep.state.nj.us for more information.

Federal depredation permits: Year-round

Permits issued by the USFWS will continue to be required for airports wishing to control geese throughout the year.